

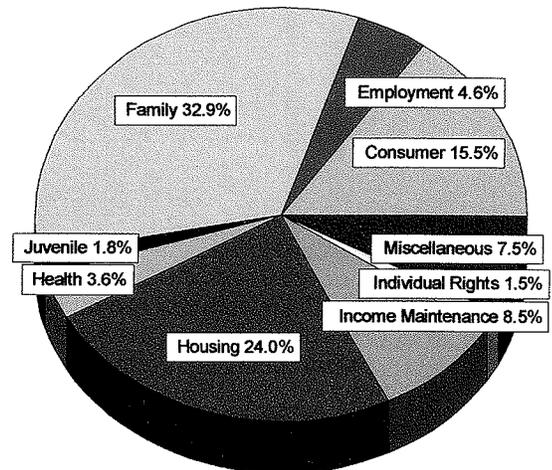
IOWA LEGAL AID

Iowa Legal Aid is requesting a state appropriation of 2.8 million dollars for fiscal year 2011, the same amount that was requested for fiscal year 2010.

Services for Vulnerable Iowans:

- Iowa Legal Aid is the statewide provider of free civil legal representation to low-income Iowans, working out of 10 regional offices across the state, serving residents of all 99 counties each year.
- Iowa Legal Aid does not provide assistance with criminal law cases which are handled by state public defenders and contract attorneys.
- In 2009, Iowa Legal Aid closed 25,250 cases, serving an estimated 59,900 Iowans, 25,750 of whom were children.
- Iowa Legal Aid provides information and education for over 100,000 Iowans annually through its website at www.iowalegalaid.org and a series of outreach programs.

2009 Closures by Case Type



Recent Trends:

- Iowa Legal Aid experienced an increase in requests for assistance in all areas when comparing 2009 with 2008. The most dramatic increases were:
 - Foreclosures/Forfeitures (up 145%)
 - Unemployment Compensation Benefits (up 63%)
 - Domestic Violence (up 23%)
 - The total number of cases closed increased by 15% (in 2008, 22,000 cases were closed, impacting approximately 51,000 individuals)
- A projected 17,000 families were turned away or underserved in 2009 due to lack of staff resources.
- A 2009 Legal Services Corporation (LSC) study entitled Documenting the Justice Gap in America – The Current Unmet Civil Legal Needs for Low-Income Americans, found that for every client served by an LSC-funded program, at least one person was turned away because of insufficient resources and that only a very small percentage of the legal problems experienced by low-income persons (one in five or less) were addressed with the assistance of a private attorney or a legal aid lawyer. That report also found that state courts, especially those courts that deal with issues affecting low-income people, are facing significantly increased numbers of unrepresented litigants. Studies show that the vast majority of people who appear without representation are unable to afford an attorney, and a large percentage of them are low-income people who qualify for legal aid.

Facts:

- Women and children seeking freedom from abuse and elderly Iowans seeking to preserve an acceptable standard of living are the largest segment of Iowa Legal Aid's clients.
- Of the cases handled by Iowa Legal Aid, 69% involve assistance to women, often involving legal problems arising from domestic abuse.
- Iowa Legal Aid is the recognized expert on poverty law in Iowa, working in conjunction and consultation with other human services agencies, the courts, and other law firms. For example, Iowa Legal Aid worked closely with the Iowa Supreme Court's *pro se* efforts both through initial study and the development of *pro se* forms.
- Staff attorneys are augmented by more than 2,500 volunteer attorneys donating nearly \$1.9 million in pro bono services every year.

Funding Developments:

- Iowa Legal Aid's funding from the Supreme Court's IOLTA Commission was reduced as a result of reduced interest rates and falling revenues for the Commission. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009, the reduction was more than \$308,000, almost 40% of Iowa Legal Aid's IOLTA grant.
- Violence Against Women Act funding of \$300,000 per year from the U.S. Department of Justice, has not been renewed for 2010.
- Access to the court system for low-income Iowans charged with a crime is supported by the state with an appropriation in excess of \$50 million. State funding for civil legal assistance was \$1,954,634 for FY10, but after across the board cuts, Iowa Legal Aid received \$1,759,171 for the year ending June 30, 2010.
- Nearly 80% of Iowa Legal Aid's budget is personnel costs. Health insurance costs increased in 2009 by nearly 15%.
- Iowa Legal Aid's entry level salary for staff attorneys is currently \$40,250. This is significantly below other public service positions such as Public Defender, County Attorney and Attorney General offices.

CLIENT COMMENTS ON IOWA LEGAL AID

"We won my case for unemployment insurance which saved me from becoming homeless and gave me hope."

"I was able to get my protection order and was offered help with any future problems. The attorney made me feel comfortable when I was scared and nervous."

"I was completely satisfied and do appreciate your being there. As an older senior citizen we need help in how to handle situations that arise."

"You helped me and my family from losing our home, and avoided me having to go to court. And the foreclosure that I had against me is now dismissed."